

Application No.: 09/785,693
Response to OA dated: April 29, 2004
Amendment dated: September 29, 2004

Remarks

The above Amendments and these Remarks are in reply to the Office Action mailed April 29, 2004. The fee for addition of new claims is included herewith. A petition for extension of time is also submitted herewith, together with the appropriate fee.

I. Summary of Examiners Rejections

Prior to the Office Action mailed April 29, 2004, Claims 1-20 were pending in the Application. In the Office Action mailed April 29, 2004, Claims 1-7 and 11-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Marks (U.S. Patent No. 5,956,491). Claims 8 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Marks in view of De Simone et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,212,548, hereafter De Simone). Claims 9 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Marks in view of Porter (U.S. Patent No. 6,434,599). Claims 10 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Marks and De Simone as applied to claims 1, 8, 11 and 18, and further in view of Pinard et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,230,287, hereafter Pinard).

II. Summary of Applicants' Amendment

The present Response amends claims 1, 2, 4-12, and 14-20; cancels claims 3 and 13; and adds new claims 21-31, leaving for the Examiner's present consideration Claims 1,2, 4-12 and 14-31. Reconsideration of the Application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Applicant reserves the right to prosecute any originally presented claims or canceled claims in a continuing or future application.

III. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

In the Office Action mailed April 29, 2004, Claims 1-7 and 11-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Marks (U.S. Patent No. 5,956,491).

Claim 1

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Claim 1 has been amended by the current Response to more clearly define the embodiment of the invention therein. As amended, Claim 1 defines:

1. *(Amended) A conversation manager for managing the flow of messages in a collaboration system, comprising:
a conversation initiation logic that initiates a conversation among participants, wherein said conversation is a collective set of messages exchanged according to an extensible protocol, wherein said extensible protocol provides the ability to specify both the information and business protocols used by participants for said conversation;
a participation registration logic that registers said participants in said conversation;
and,
a conversation repository that stores conversation management data, wherein said conversation management data is used to manage said conversation among said participants.*

Claim 1, as currently amended, defines a conversation manager for managing the flow of messages in a collaboration system, comprising a conversation initiation logic that initiates a conversation among participants, wherein said conversation is a collective set of messages exchanged according to an extensible protocol, wherein said extensible protocol provides the ability to specify both the information and business protocols used by participants for said conversation. Applicant respectfully submits that these features are not disclosed by the cited references. Particularly, in the embodiment of the invention defined by Claim 1, the protocol for exchanging messages provides the ability to specify both the information and business protocols used by the participants in the conversation.

Marks discloses a computerized human communication arbitration and distributing system. As shown in Figure 1, a Controller Computer 3 runs under the control of Controller Software 2, which directs the Controller Computer to arbitrate in accordance with predefined rules including a user identity, which ones of Participator Computers 5 can interact with one of a plurality of groups through the controller computer and to distribute real time data to the respective ones of the groups. (Col. 5, Lines 8-14). The Participator Computers each run under the control of Participator Software 4, which directs each of the Participator Computers to handle a user Interface 6 permitting one said

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user to send a multimedia information Message 8 to the Controller Computer, which arbitrates which of the Participator Computers receives the multimedia information Message and which conveys the multimedia information Message to the selected Participator Computers to present the multimedia information Message to the respective user (Col 5, Lines 15-25) . This suggests that, in Marks the participants (i.e. the users) are under the control of Participator Software exchanging multimedia information according to an information exchange protocol based on predefined rules, via the Controller Computer. Hence, since it is based on predefined rules, the protocol is not an extensible one. Furthermore, it appears that the protocol in Marks does not provide support for exchanging business protocols, rather it only supports exchange of multimedia messages.

However, in the embodiment of the invention defined by Claim 1, as currently amended, the protocol is extensible. Furthermore, the extensible protocol provides the ability to exchange information and business protocols used by participants for said conversation.

In view of the above comments, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 1 is neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

Claims 2 and 4-7

Claims 2 and 4-7 are not addressed separately but it is respectfully submitted that these claims are allowable as depending from an allowable independent claim and further in view of the comments provided above. Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 2 and 4-7 are similarly neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

It is also submitted that these claims also add their own limitations which render them patentable in their own right. Applicant reserves the right to argue these limitations should it become necessary in the future.

Claim 3

Claim 3 has been canceled by the current response, rendering moot the rejection of this claim.

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Claim 11

The comments provided above with respect to Claim 1 are incorporated herein by reference. Claim 11, as currently amended, defines a method for managing conversations in a collaboration system, comprising the steps of initiating a conversation among participants, wherein said conversation is a collective set of messages exchanged according to an extensible protocol, wherein said extensible protocol provides the ability to specify both the information and business protocols used by participants for said conversation; registering said participants in said conversation. Particularly, in the embodiment of the invention defined by Claim 11, the protocol for exchanging messages is extensible, and also provides ability to specify both the information and business protocols used by the participants in the conversation.

In view of the above-described amendments to Claim 11, and for similar reasons as given above with respect to Claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 11 is similarly neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of, the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

Claims 12 and 14-17

Claims 12 and 14-17 are not addressed separately but it is respectfully submitted that these claims are allowable as depending from an allowable independent claim and further in view of the comments provided above. Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 12 and 14-17 are similarly neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view, of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

It is also submitted that these claims also add their own limitations which render them patentable in their own right. Applicant reserves the right to argue these limitations should it become necessary in the future.

Claim 13

Claim 13 has been canceled by the current response, rendering moot the rejection of this claim.

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IV. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claim 8

In the Office Action mailed April 29, 2004, claims 8 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Marks in view of De Simone (U.S. Patent No. 6,212,548).

The comments provided above with respect to Claim 1 are incorporated herein by reference. Claim 8 depends from and includes all of the limitations and features of Claim 1. Claim 8, as currently amended, further defines that a conversation is terminated by a terminator participant authorized to terminate said conversation among all said participants.

De Simone discloses a system and method for multiple asynchronous chat conversations. As disclosed in De Simone, it appears that removing a participant from the list of participants in that session, ensures that any other messages for this chat room will not be broadcast to that participant. (Col.13, Lines 28-30). This suggests that the chat session among other participants is still active even when the participant is removed from the list of participants in that session, i.e. the session is not terminated and other participants can continue the chat. Hence it appears that De Simone does not disclose session termination, but instead discloses that a participant may leave an active session.

However in the embodiment of the invention defined by Claim 8, the conversation is terminated among all participants, so that no further messages can be exchanged in that conversation.

Furthermore, De Simone teaches that a mechanism is present to ensure that a request to leave a chat room from a participant in a chat room session sending messages to other participants has to be confirmed, and that only that concerned participant issues the request. This ensures that not any participant in that chat room can drop anybody else. (Col. 13, Lines 31-35). Hence it appears that a participant cannot drop another participant.

However in the embodiment of the invention defined by Claim 8, a terminator participant that is authorized to terminate, can terminate the conversation among all participants.

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In view of the above-described amendments, and for the reasons given above, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 8 is neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

Claim 18

Claim 18 is not addressed separately but it is respectfully submitted that this claim is allowable as depending from an allowable independent claim and further in view of the comments provided above. Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 18 is similarly neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view, of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

It is also submitted that this claim also adds its own limitations which render it patentable in its own right. Applicant reserves the right to argue these limitations should it become necessary in the future.

Claim 9

In the Office Action mailed April 29, 2004, Claims 9 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Marks in view of Porter (U.S. Patent No. 6,434,599).

The comments provided above with respect to Claim 1 are incorporated herein by reference. Claim 9 depends from and includes all of the limitations and features of Claim 1. Claim 9 as currently amended, further defines that said conversation is aborted at any time by the conversation manager by sending abort messages to all participants.

Porter discloses a method and apparatus for on-line chatting. Porter apparently includes a dynamic formation of chat session for a first online user and a second online user to chat with each other. If the command from a participant of a chat session is a quit command, and the transmitting participant is the last participant, the chat session manager terminates the chat session. (Col. 8, Lines 57-62). Hence, it appears that the chat session manager terminates the chat session when the last participant quits the chat session. Hence, the chat session is terminated by chat session manager only when the last participant leaves the session, and not when the participants are still involved in the session.

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However, in the embodiment of the invention defined by Claim 9, as currently amended, the conversation can be aborted at any time by the conversation manager by sending abort messages to all the participants.

In view of the above-described amendments, and for the reasons given above, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 9 is neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

Claim 19

Claim 19 is not addressed separately but it is respectfully submitted that this claim is allowable as depending from an allowable independent claim and further in view of the comments provided above. Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 19 is similarly neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view, of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

It is also submitted that this claim also adds its own limitations which render it patentable in its own right. Applicant reserves the right to argue these limitations should it become necessary in the future.

Claim 10

In the Office Action mailed April 29, 2004, Claims 10 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Marks and De Simone as applied to claims 1, 8, 11 and 18, and further in view of Pinard (U.S. Patent No. 6,230,287).

Through inadvertent typographical error, Claim 10 had been originally presented as depending from Claim 8. Claim 10 has been amended by the present Response and no longer depends from Claim 8, but instead properly depends from Claim 9.

Claim 10 as currently amended, further defines that a participant in the aborted conversation may be compensated for automatically by a substitute participant.

Pinard discloses a web based help desk. The web based help desk apparently includes a web server to allow remote users to access the help desk web page. Once a connection between a support specialist computer (first participant) and a user computer (second participant) is

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terminated, the SSSQ application waits for a predetermined amount of time to elapse before prompting the web server to connect the support specialist personal computer to the user at the top of the queue. (Col 5, Line 66 - Col 6, Line 4). Hence, it appears that, in Pinard, a terminated conversation suggests that the session is completed, i.e. is not aborted. It also appears that a conversation that is terminated is not compensated for automatically by a substitute participant.

However, in the embodiment of the invention defined by claim 10, as currently amended, the conversation is aborted, and is compensated for automatically by a substitute participant.

In view of the above-described amendments, and for the reasons given above, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 10 is neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

Claim 20

Through inadvertent typographical error, Claim 20 had been originally presented as depending from Claim 18. Claim 20 has been amended by the present Response and no longer depends from Claim 18, but instead properly depends from Claim 19.

Claim 20 is not addressed separately but it is respectfully submitted that this claim is allowable as depending from an allowable independent claim and further in view of the comments provided above. Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 20 is similarly neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of the cited references, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

It is also submitted that this claim also adds its own limitations which render it patentable in its own right. Applicant reserves the right to argue these limitations should it become necessary in the future.

V. Additional Amendments

Claims 21-31

Claims 21-31 have been newly added by the present Response. Applicant respectfully requests that new Claims 21-31 be included in the Application and considered therewith.

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VI. Conclusion


The references cited by the Examiner but not relied upon have been reviewed, but are not believed to render the claims unpatentable, either singly or in combination.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the Claims now pending in the subject patent application should be allowable, and reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested. The Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned if he can assist in any way in expediting issuance of a patent.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any underpayment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 06-1325 for any matter in connection with this response, including any fee for extension of time, which may be required.

Respectfully submitted,

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